

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

3927 Lennane Drive, Suite #100
Sacramento, CA 95834
916 419-2510



CONTACT: John Carr, Public Information Officer
(916)-419-2525

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ABC Cites Four People in San Gabriel Valley Minor Decoy Operation

San Gabriel Valley - Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) have cited a clerk for selling alcohol to three minors and cited three minors for possession of the alcoholic beverages, as well as for possession of marijuana. In addition, another adult male was arrested for driving under the influence (DUI). The DUI arrest was made with the assistance of the California Highway Patrol.

The actions were the result of a compliance check on January 20, 2006. On that date, ABC conducted a minor decoy operation in several cities within the San Gabriel Valley. The operation included a minor under the direct supervision of the investigators, who attempted to purchase alcohol from seven separate retail licensees in the Cities of Azusa, Baldwin Park, Irwindale and Temple City..

The operation resulted in one citation against a store clerk, citations for three minors caught with alcohol and marijuana and the arrest of an adult who was driving under the influence.

Those who sell to a minor face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business's liquor license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunk driving fatalities than the general adult population. Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is approximately 16 percent.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety, through the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.